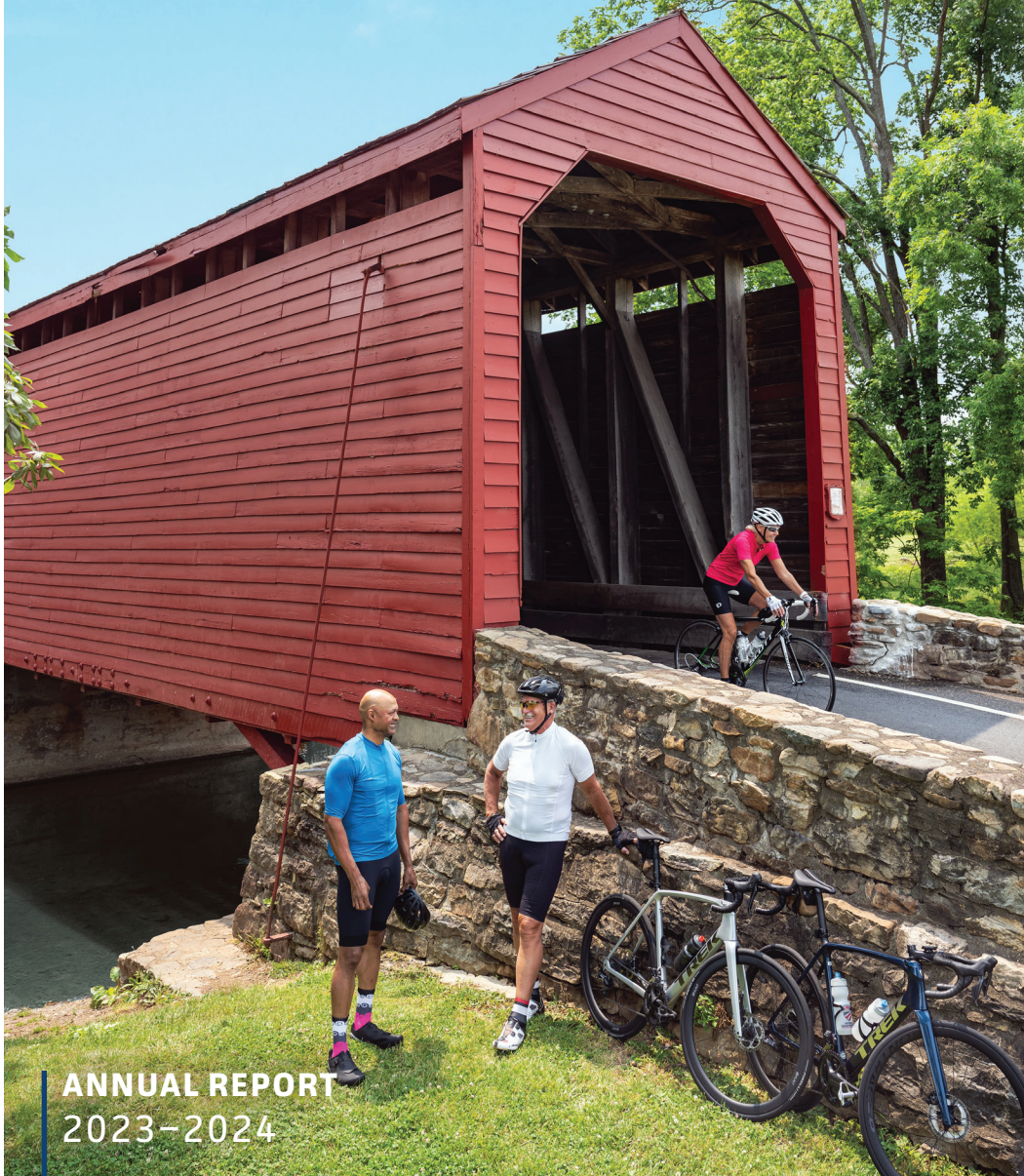


VISIT
Frederick
CITY & COUNTY



ANNUAL REPORT
2023-2024

In 2023,
**1.9 MILLION
PEOPLE VISITED
FREDERICK
COUNTY**

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As we reflect upon the achievements of the past year, Visit Frederick is proud to present our Annual Report for FY24.

This report highlights a year of innovation and dynamic collaboration, demonstrating how Visit Frederick shares Frederick County's vibrancy and charm with a global audience. Despite ongoing challenges in the tourism industry, our steadfast dedication to showcasing our region has achieved outstanding results. We've driven economic growth, boosted community engagement, and cemented our status as a premier travel destination in Maryland.

This year saw Visit Frederick move several major projects forward, including a complete transformation of our well-known Tourism Reinvestment in Promotion & Product Program (TRIPP) highlighted by an all-time high in awarded grant funding, the debut of a new orientation film, and the continued development of the new exhibits that will be featured at the Frederick Visitor Center in the current fiscal year.

Collaboration with our members and partners, the dedication of our team, and the continued vibrancy of Frederick County have converged to create another year of growth and impact. As we look ahead, we remain steadfast in our commitment to advancing Frederick County's prominence as a visitor destination. With the insights gained from this report, we embark on another year of inspiration, aspiration, and achievement in sharing what makes Frederick County a special place for visitors to experience and enjoy.



Dave Ziedelis
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Visit Frederick (The Tourism Council of Frederick County) is a public-private partnership dedicated to enhancing the economic benefit of tourism for Frederick County's businesses, attractions, local governments, and residents. Membership is open to businesses and individuals interested in promoting tourism in Frederick County.

Frederick Visitor Center
151 S. East Street · Frederick, Maryland
301-600-4047 · visitfrederick.org

   **#visitfrederick**

Board of Directors

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NATIONAL SHRINE OF SAINT
ELIZABETH ANN SETON

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COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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& SUITES BRUNSWICK

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FREDERICK COUNTY
GOVERNMENT

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MARYLAND MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

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Monica Pearce
TENTH WARD
DISTILLING COMPANY

David Price
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF CIVIL
WAR MEDICINE

Sherif Salem
THE MAIN CUP/HOOTCH &
BANTER

Amie St. Angelo
SPRINGFIELD MANOR

Non-Voting Community Liaisons

Robert Black
CATOCTIN MOUNTAIN
ORCHARD

Barbara Hiller
WEINBERG CENTER
FOR THE ARTS

Kara Norman
DOWNTOWN FREDERICK
PARTNERSHIP

Rick Slade
CATOCTIN MOUNTAIN PARK

Staff

Dave Ziedelis
Executive Director

Becky Bickerton
Assistant Director

Katie Reichard
Operations Director

Jake Wynn
Senior Marketing and
Communications Manager

John Lustrea
Visitor Services Manager

Emily Griffin
Marketing and Partnership
Coordinator

Noel Samoroj
Destination Development
Administrative Assistant

Barbara Brewster
Contract Accountant

Visitor Services Specialists

Dave Catlin
Debbie Ciechoski
Wendy Duke
Melissa Gregory
Maria F. Lane
Debbie Culler
Fred Genau
Randy Gray
Emma Nanes
Renate Owen

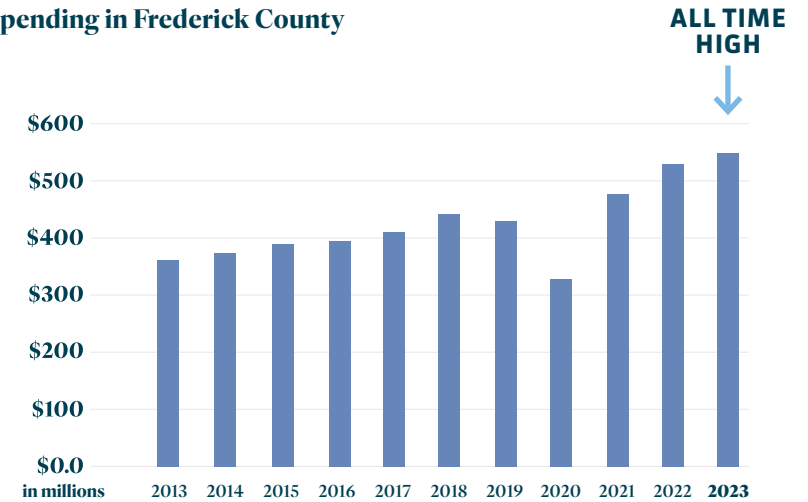
Visitor Spending in Frederick County

For the second straight year, visitor spending in Frederick County surpassed \$500 million in 2023, according to Tourism Economics data released in August 2024.

The tourism industry continues to be a thriving economic engine for Frederick County, with visitors spending an all-time high of \$539 million in the region in 2023.

Among all of the counties in the State of Maryland, Frederick County remains the 7th highest in visitor spending. Since 1998, visitors have spent more than \$8.2 billion in Frederick County, supporting local businesses and playing a crucial role in our region's economic vitality.

Visitor Spending in Frederick County



\$539 million

VISITOR SPENDING IN 2023

4%
ABOVE 2022



27%
ABOVE 2019



Visitation Data

Visitation to Frederick County held steady in 2023, with almost 2 million visitors traveling to the region.

According to the Tourism Economics report issued in August 2024, 1.98 million visitors traveled to Frederick County in 2023, continuing our recovery from the pandemic-era drop in visitation experienced in 2020-2021. In 2023, visitation numbers remained comparable to 2022.

Visitors are classified as those traveling at least 50 miles to their destination. Visitation to Frederick County has grown steadily over the last two decades, including the percentage of overnight visitors, reflecting successes since the establishment of our local hotel rental tax in 2004.

1.98 million

VISITORS IN 2023

↑ **Stable**

OVER 7.2% GROWTH IN VISITATION OVER 2022

Maintained 92%

OF PRE-PANDEMIC VISITATION



767,000

OVERNIGHT VISITORS

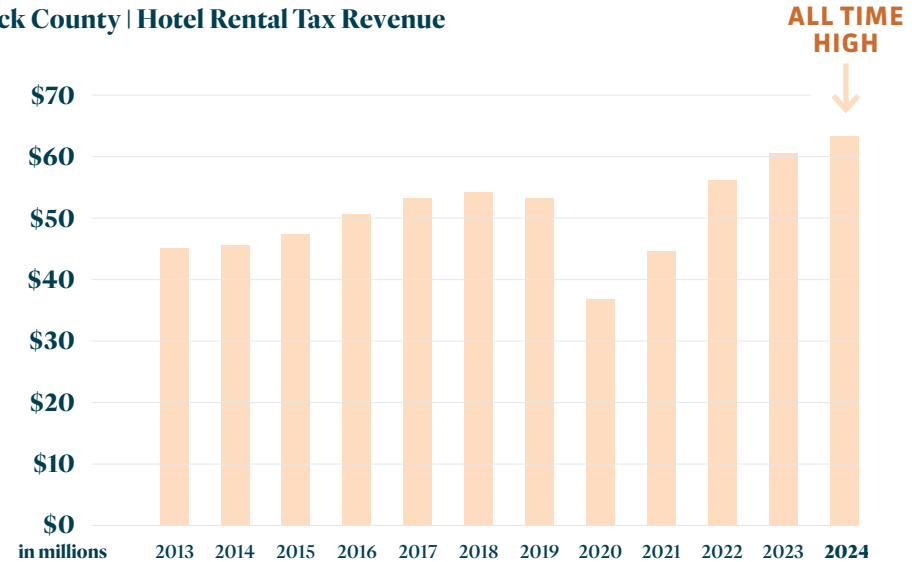


1.2 million

DAYTRIP VISITORS



Frederick County | Hotel Rental Tax Revenue



\$61.2 million

HOTEL RENTAL TAX REVENUE IN FY2024

1.3%

ABOVE FY2023



14%

ABOVE FY2019 (PRE-COVID 19)

Hotel Rental Tax Revenue

Hotel rental tax revenues again eclipsed an all-time high in FY2024, marking the second time in Frederick County history that hotels reported more than \$60 million in tax revenue.

Frederick County hotel rental tax revenues have steadily increased over the last 20 years, despite financial downturns and a global pandemic in 2020-22. In FY24, hotel rental tax revenues continued with slight increases over the previous all-time high recorded in FY23. Overnight visitors continue to fuel the success of Frederick County as a thriving visitor destination, with hotel tax revenues funding Visit Frederick's marketing efforts to continue the hospitality industry's growth in the region.

Economic Impact

Tourism remains a crucial driver of Frederick County's economic development, as evidenced by sustained growth in both the number of visitors and visitor spending throughout the region.

Tourism's impact on Frederick County is undeniable, with more than 6,100 jobs supported by visitor spending in the region in 2023. Beyond supporting local businesses and organizations, visitors significantly boosted the local economy through tax contributions at every level—local, state, and federal.

As a cornerstone of Frederick County's economic landscape, tourism continues to drive growth and energize our community.



JOBS

6,144

VISITOR SUPPORTED JOBS
IN FREDERICK COUNTY

VISITOR SUPPORTED
JOBS ACCOUNT FOR

5.8%

OF TOTAL FREDERICK
COUNTY EMPLOYMENT

SPENDING



\$70 million

WAS SPENT IN LOCAL
RETAIL BUSINESSES



\$78 million

WAS SPENT ON
RECREATION ACTIVITIES



\$158 million

WAS SPENT BY VISITORS IN
LOCAL RESTAURANTS AND
CRAFT BEVERAGE BUSINESSES

Investing in the Future of Frederick County Tourism

The growth of the tourism industry in Frederick County can be traced to the commitment of a dedicated revenue source—funding from the county hotel rental tax.

As per a Memorandum of Understanding with Frederick County Government, and after the removal of necessary administrative fees, 10% of our local hotel rental tax is directed towards the bonds and capital improvements of the Frederick Visitor Center located on East Street.

37.5% is dedicated to three tourism-related initiatives that directly fund non-profit organizations and governmental agencies: Tourism Reinvestment in Promotion and Product Program (TRIPP), Main Street Communities Cooperative Program, and the Destination Development Fund.

On an annual basis, Visit Frederick directly commits approximately 20% of expenditures to advertising and marketing with the goal to increase out-of-county visitation to Frederick County.



TRIPP Success in FY24

Grants through the TRIPP program went to support a variety of Frederick County projects that will continue to benefit tourism attractions and initiatives into the future.

TRIPP Program

The Tourism Reinvestment in Promotion & Product Program (TRIPP) provides an opportunity for Frederick County’s nonprofit organizations to apply for advertising awards and development grants.

The goal of the program is to increase the number of visitors to Frederick County, encouraging them to stay longer, increasing the number of overnight stays in Frederick County hotels, and enhancing the overall marketability of Frederick as a destination. This program provides an opportunity for tourism-related nonprofits and government agencies to further their initiatives and create a more vibrant experience for visitors and residents.

During FY24 the TRIPP program invested over \$300,000 in Frederick County nonprofits and government agencies. The funding supplements local marketing budgets, allowing organizations to reach their target audience in new ways and represent Frederick County in a variety of digital and print media.

\$4.1 million

Invested in Frederick County NONPROFITS & GOVERNMENT AGENCIES SINCE 2005

\$300,000

Invested in Frederick County NONPROFITS & GOVERNMENT AGENCIES DURING FY24

GRANT INITIATIVE

Main Street Co-op Advertising Initiative

Frederick County’s 5 designated Main Street communities partnered together to target markets through Comcast advertising—a partnership that encouraged visitors to explore the entire county.



GRANT INITIATIVE

National Museum of Civil War Medicine

The museum developed a concept and design plan to upgrade their exhibits. The museum is currently on schedule to unveil new exhibits in time for the US 250th.



GRANT INITIATIVE

GreenSpring Foundation

The GreenSpring Foundation brought a world class harp concert series to Frederick County, featuring musicians of all ages and backgrounds, including former Royal Harpist Claire Jones.

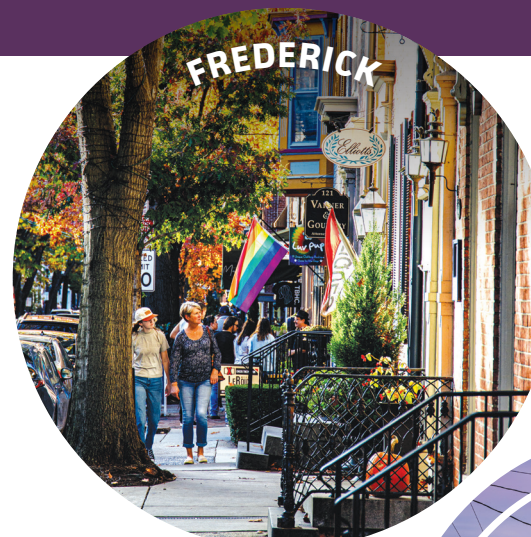


Main Street Communities Cooperative Program

Frederick County is home to 5 designated Main Streets: Frederick, Brunswick, Middletown, Thurmont, and New Market. Emmitsburg is a Main Street affiliate.

These Main Streets are a testament to the community's commitment to preserving the charm and character of Frederick County's historic municipalities. The Frederick County Main Street Communities Cooperative Fund was developed in partnership with Frederick County Government to support the development and promotion of the Main Street program.

Through this fund, over \$315,000 was distributed to Frederick County's 5 designated Main Streets in FY24. Since the fund's inception in 2016, over \$1.97 million has been invested into the Main Streets.



\$1.97 million
INVESTED INTO FREDERICK COUNTY'S MAIN STREETS SINCE 2016

\$315,000
DISTRIBUTED TO OUR MAIN STREETS IN FY24





Destination Development in Frederick County

Destination Development funding provides sponsorship opportunities for outdoor recreation, agritourism, heritage tourism, workforce development, and visitor-oriented events in Frederick County.

This initiative provides an opportunity to develop, grow, and evolve current visitor experiences to strengthen and support tourism throughout Frederick County. The programs supported are beloved by locals and visitors alike, creating a shared sense of value and community commitment.

\$345,000
DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT FUNDS DISTRIBUTED IN FY24

\$1.8 million
DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT FUNDS DISTRIBUTED SINCE PROGRAM'S INCEPTION IN 2017

Destination Development Successes

Destination Development funds have supported one of Frederick County's most unique and beloved events.

This year featured the 10th National Clustered Spires High Wheel Race. Visit Frederick has been an ongoing supporter of this event and is thrilled to see how it continues to grow and draw visitors from around the country.



Destination Development funds helped restore a famous piece of public art in Frederick County - Edge of Gravity.

William Cochran's series, "Angels in the Architecture," has been a foundational part of Downtown Frederick's public art initiative since 1991. Visit Frederick worked with Cochran Studios to identify an artist to restore the "Edge of Gravity" mural to its former glory.



Destination Marketing

As the designated Destination Marketing Organization for Frederick County, Visit Frederick plays a pivotal role in promoting unique attractions and cultural experiences. By crafting compelling content and strategic campaigns, Visit Frederick drives tourism, supports local businesses, and fosters economic growth. Our marketing team completed key projects in FY24 to enhance the visitor experience for Frederick County.

- Redesigned the **Civil War Sites brochure**
- Revised and reprinted the **Wineries, Breweries, Distilleries guide**
- Produced a fall/winter and spring **Events Snapshot**
- Produced and printed 150,000 **Frederick Visitor Guides** (2024)
- Designed a new microsite for **VisitFrederick.org**, including content and interactive maps, to compliment **Civil War Trails brochures**

In February, Visit Frederick was able to secure a billboard in the area of York Spring in Adams County, PA. The billboard faces north in the southbound lane of Rt. 15 towards Gettysburg. The content for the billboard will be swapped out at least two times per year to keep the subject matter timely and relevant to travelers en route to Frederick County.



Destination Advertising

In FY24, Visit Frederick maintained a healthy mix of various advertising mediums including, print, digital, radio, and social media. Stunning images and compelling content target specific audiences with advertising themes focused on promoting the top reasons people visit Frederick County: history, outdoor recreation, craft beverages, the arts, and shopping & dining.

Visit Frederick placed more than \$680,000 in advertising during FY24, which included a marketing grant from the Maryland Office of Tourism Development in the amount of \$259,408.

FY24 Advertising Placements*:

- AAA World Magazine
- Better Homes & Gardens
- Blue Ridge Outdoors
- Comcast
- Expedia
- Garden & Gun Magazine
- Group Tour Magazine
- iHeartMedia Podcast
- Maryland Road Trips
- Newsday
- Philadelphia Magazine
- Pittsburgh Magazine
- Real Simple Magazine
- Southern Living
- Trip Advisor
- Washington Post
- WUSA9
- WXPB Radio

**This is not a complete list of FY24 advertising placements.*

Our Print Advertisements
RESULTED IN

10,534

Travel Packet Requests
SENT TO
FUTURE VISITORS

Media Relations

Frederick County played a starring role in many travel articles and blogs in FY24.

We worked with dozens of journalists and media outlets in 2023-24, including several familiarization (FAM) tours for international journalists.

The resulting earned media coverage showcased a diverse array of Frederick County's attractions and events, capturing the attention of regional, national, and international media outlets. While events like the National Clustered Spires High Wheel Race and Sailing Through the Winter Solstice capture much attention, we work with journalists to highlight dining, shopping, history, the arts, and outdoor recreation in our destination.

Visit Frederick, in collaboration with the Maryland Office of Tourism Development and Capital Region USA (CRUSA), has strategically targeted the European media market to enhance awareness of Frederick. In February 2024, Jake Wynn embarked on a media tour to the UK and Ireland with CRUSA, engaging with more than 40 journalists and introducing Frederick County to this media market.

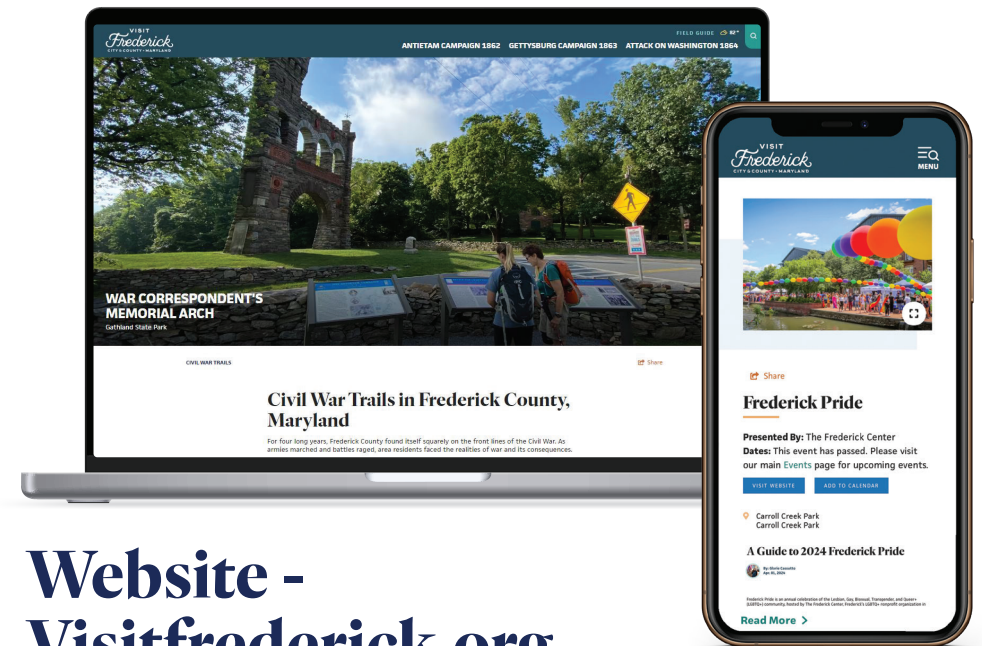


Jake Wynn pitched stories in Dublin, Ireland during a February 2024 Media Mission.

The following are among the outlets we worked with in FY24 to share stories about visitor experiences in Frederick County:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Washington Post | ABA Magazine |
| Washingtonian Magazine | Outside Magazine |
| Baltimore Magazine | AARP's The Girlfriend Blog |
| Arlington Magazine | The Burg |
| NBC4 | Northern Ireland Travel News (Northern Ireland) |
| WTOP | Travel Mole (United Kingdom) |
| FOX5 | TourEXPI (Germany) |
| WDMV | |
| Southern Living | |
| New York Family Magazine | |
| Pittsburgh Magazine | |
| Frederick Magazine (Monthly Column) | |
| Frederick News Post | |

In August 2023, Visit Frederick and partners welcomed FOX5's ZIP Trip to Carroll Creek Park



Website - Visitfrederick.org

The Visit Frederick website continues to be our most successful and far-reaching marketing effort.

In FY24, Visit Frederick has continued to enhance and expand the Visit Frederick website with new updates and content. By incorporating blog posts from community members, adding fresh video content, and implementing new design elements, including a new Civil War Trails microsite, VisitFrederick.org remains a cornerstone of our marketing strategy.

This year, we embedded video content from our new orientation film across the site and uploaded over 20 new blog posts. Working closely with our website developer, Simpleview, Visit Frederick maintains its position as an industry leader among mid-sized Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) in terms of website excellence.

**As of June 30, 2024.*

MORE THAN
874,000
Individual Users Accessed
VISITFREDERICK.ORG
IN FY24*

VisitFrederick.org
RECEIVED
3.3 million
VIEWS IN FY24*

Social Media



20,112
FOLLOWERS



15,883
FOLLOWERS

Combined Social Media Reach
IN FY24
4.4 million
USERS

Combined Social Media Engagement
IN FY24
132,000
ENGAGED USERS



Conferences & Trade Shows

Visit Frederick staff members attend trade shows throughout the year to promote Frederick County to specific market segments and also attend conferences to pursue professional development opportunities.

- Pennsylvania Bus Association Marketplace
- American Bus Association Marketplace
- Global Travel Exchange
- IPW
- ESTO
- Capital Region USA - UK Media Mission

- Capital Region USA - Germany Sales Mission
- Mid-Atlantic Tourism Public Relations Alliance (MATPRA) Media Marketplace
- Public Relations Society of America Travel and Tourism Conference

- Destinations International Annual Convention
- Destinations International Marketing & Communications Summit
- Maryland Tourism & Travel Summit
- Simpleview Summit



Becky Bickerton in Hamburg, Germany representing Visit Frederick during the 2024 German Sales Mission with Capital Region USA



Visitor Services

Our excellent Visitor Services team is proud to welcome thousands of visitors from around the world to Frederick County each year.

Their work connects visitors with experiences they can enjoy throughout the region, an invaluable opportunity for our visitors who receive expert recommendations about what to see and do during their time in the region. The Frederick Visitor Center remains an essential resource to the City of Frederick and Frederick County.

20,317 | VISITORS TO THE FREDERICK VISITOR CENTER IN FY24

Top 5 Visitor States



MARYLAND



PENNSYLVANIA



VIRGINIA



NEW JERSEY



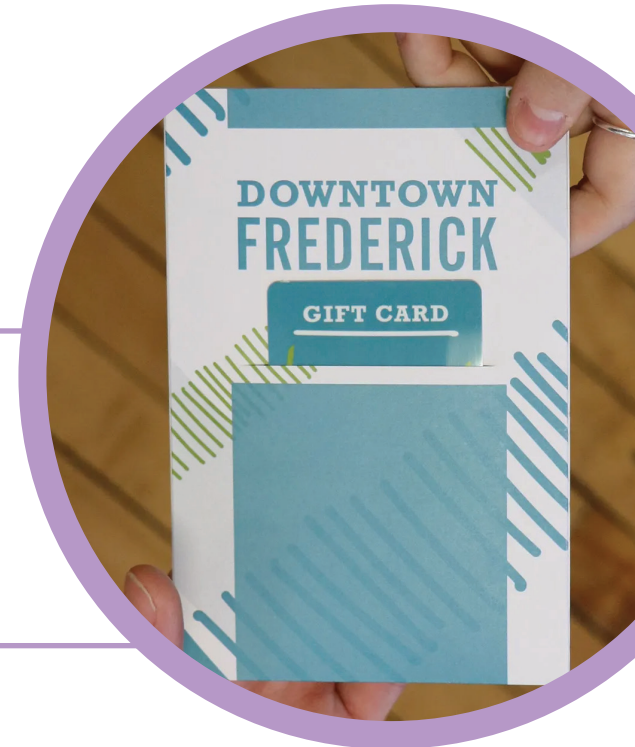
FLORIDA

**DOWNTOWN FREDERICK
GIFT CARD SALES IN FY24**

\$349,580

**VISITOR CENTER
RETAIL SALES IN FY24**

\$22,418.39



Top 5 Visitor Countries



CANADA



GERMANY



SPAIN



UNITED
KINGDOM



FRANCE

Membership

Membership Program

Partnering with Visit Frederick means making an investment in the future of Frederick County. Membership is open to businesses and individuals interested in promoting tourism in Frederick County, an industry that generates hundreds of millions of dollars for the region's economy each year. Visit Frederick members receive benefits such as custom listings in the official Frederick County Visitor Guide and on visitfrederick.org, access to Marketing Committee meetings and Destination Insights Newsletter, displaying rack cards and brochures at the Frederick Visitor Center, as well as invitations to Downtown Frederick and Frederick County familiarization tours.

Membership Events

In October 2023, we held our Fall Annual Meeting and Networking Breakfast at Springfield Manor Winery Distillery Brewery in Thurmont. In May 2024, we hosted a Spring Social at The National Shrine of Elizabeth Ann Seton in Emmitsburg.



The Downtown Frederick Familiarization Tour took place in May 2024.



FY24
TOTAL MEMBERS

400

FY24 New Members:

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS!

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| PB Dye Golf Club | Catoctin Furnace Blacksmith Shop |
| Urban Air | Frederick Skyline |
| Maryland Double Deckers | Wander Inn |
| Rosie Cheeks Distillery | Maryland Homeaway |
| Nelson Coleman Jewelers | Oscar's Alehouse West |
| Claggett Center | Spires Brass Band |
| River's Edge Trails | Friends of Lefty Kreh (FoLK) |
| Crash and Catharsis Rage Factory | DCAcar |
| Free Indeed Candles | Hinzi's Kitchen |
| Frederick Flying Cows | Thai Meric Eatery & Bar |
| This Town - Tourist Services App | Sushi Nomu |
| Showtime Sound LLC | |